



2023 Student Guide

GLSEN's Day of Silence occurs every April where people in schools across the country engage in collective action, calling attention to the silencing of LGBTQ+ students in schools and the erasure of their experiences.

This year, GLSEN's Day of Silence takes place April 14, 2022.

There is an unprecedented level of anti-trans and anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric and policy currently being weaponized against our community, and we thank you for everything you have been doing for and in solidarity with students.

As LGBTQ+ students and educators across the country face attacks on their rights to access **affirming books, healthcare**, and even the right to be called by **the right name and pronouns at school**, we use this day as a collective protest to demonstrate the power of our voices and the impact of our silence. Protest comes with risks, and we want to ensure that educators and students alike are prepared to shape actions that fit their schools and communities.

This year, the Day of Silence theme is **Rising Up**. As part of that theme, educators and other adults across the country will spend the day speaking up in every space online and offline in defense of the rights of LGBTQ+ students. In this time when LGBTQ+ students are being targeted, it is more critical than ever for adults to loudly claim a day of NO silence. Students across the country will be both speaking up and participating in silent protest as a way to demonstrate how thousands of LGBTQ+ students across the country feel everyday — silenced.

82% of LGBTQ+ students experienced first-hand harassment or bullying in their school.

71% of students reported that their classrooms did not include any LGBTQ+ topics.

More than 30% of LGBTQ+ students reported missing school because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable.

Over half of all LGBTQ+ students of color experienced in-person victimization based on race/ethnicity.

GLSEN's resources provide opportunities for student leaders to organize their day of action and engage in creative and impactful ways to tell their stories, especially in incorporating racial, gender, and disability justice. The purpose of this guide is to help students like yourself participate and support folks on your campus to take action and join this campaign on April 14, 2022.

PREPARE FOR THE DAY OF SILENCE

Action takes some prep work!

Here are some tips to get your started in planning for your Day of Silence:

- Meet with your GSA, LGBTQ+ or other student clubs, or other students who would like to participate. Identify a supportive adult to back you up on your day of action. This is helpful in case anyone gives you trouble or if you need school staff to sponsor your event.
- **Register** for the Day of Silence with GLSEN! We will update registrants on all new material, celebrity engagements, and other opportunities! You won't want to miss out.



For more information visit glsen.org/DayOfSilence. Email questions to students@glSEN.org.

- Connect with your local **GLSEN Chapter** for support in organizing your event.
- Hold a planning meeting with other students. What are your goals for this event? How will this change your school climate? What type of actions will you take?
- Create an outreach plan to get the word out at least a week before the event to get folks to sign up, learn about the event, and take a pledge to participate.
- Make posters and hang them around school, share on social media, and on your school's morning announcements.
- If you are planning an event, check out **GLSEN's Breaking the Silence Guide** to brainstorm ideas of how to host this celebratory event at the end of the day!

WAYS TO PARTICIPATE

Student Actions

This year, students can take action in one of two ways:

1. Taking a vow of silence to demonstrate the way that too many LGBTQ+ students are made to feel on a daily basis, bringing those experiences to the forefront through silent protest
2. Taking a vow of no silence, speaking up in every space online and offline about the issues LGBTQ+ students are facing

Check out GLSEN's most recent **National School Climate Survey** and **State Snapshots** for more information about what LGBTQ+ students are up against!

HOST AN EVENT

Host Your Own Breaking the Silence Rally

- Students can make a schedule of who is speaking, performing, a simultaneous moment to Break the Silence together.
- Connect with your local GLSEN Chapter for support in organizing your event.
- Invite a guest speaker to perform or share empowering words or stories to the group.
- Hold a discussion group to Break the Silence. Listen to their story, identify ways LGBTQ+ students in your group are experiencing silencing and erasure.
 - Why was it important to you to take action and participate in the Day of Silence?
 - How are LGBTQ+ students at this school experiencing silencing and erasure?
 - Identify things at this school that make you feel unsafe?
 - What is your vision for a liberated school environment? What does it look like? What does it smell like? Who is there with you? How do you feel? What is different about this vision from your current reality?



Virtual Ideas

- Set up a video call via Zoom, Google Hangouts, Skype, etc.
- Invite your GSA, student club, and others from your school district to join virtually.
- Select a time where you will all Break the Silence virtually together! Unmute yourself and yell, say an empowering word, ring a bell, bang a pot, howl etc. Get creative!
- Set up a virtual open mic with a list of performers and speakers.

In Person Ideas

- Safety plan by understanding school safety protocols for events. For gatherings and events, create a safety plan for the event space that is communicated to the students. Work with students to identify a safe location to hold an event or gathering as some students may feel unsafe being out in the open.
- Ring a bell or honk a horn and shout a word that makes you feel seen and strong!
- Set up an in person open mic with a list of speakers and performers.
- Host a panel discussion.

Host a Viewing Party

You can watch Netflix with your friends virtually or in person. Break the Silence by watching an LGBTQ+ focused movie, show, or youtube influencer. Movies and TV Series like HairSpray, Love Simon, Love Victor, The Half of It, and The Prom have discussion guides you can use afterwards. You can also tune in to the National Breaking the Silence Rally!

SOCIAL MEDIA

Change your profile/photo frame to a Day of Silence graphic from April 7 to April 14. By changing your profile, you are demonstrating how many of us are supporting LGBTQ+ students

Post on your social media accounts explaining why you're participating. Whether you're staying silent or breaking the silence this year, write a post about your own experiences as an LGBTQ+ student who has been silenced, or share some of the ways you've seen it happen as an ally. Identify ways that you are or plan to take action, and invite others to join you. Challenge your followers to share your post, and to create similar posts of their own.

See below for a sample template:

Today is the Day of Silence — a national student-led movement highlighting the silencing and erasure of LGBTQ+ people.

82% of LGBTQ+ students experienced first-hand harassment or bullying in their school. 71% of students reported that their classrooms did not include any LGBTQ+ topics. More than 30% of LGBTQ+ students reported missing school because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable. Over half of all LGBTQ+ students of color experienced in-person victimization based on race/ethnicity.

I am participating by _____ on the #DayofSilence.

(add image description)



For more information visit glsen.org/DayOfSilence. Email questions to students@glsen.org.

#DayOfSilence Challenge

Post a video or photo and challenge your friends, family, and community to participate. *Avoid outing folks and use generic words like “friend, sibling, uncle, etc.”

You can write your own or use this template:

Today is the Day of Silence — a national day of action pushing back against the silencing of LGBTQ+ youth and the erasure of their experiences.

82% of LGBTQ+ students experienced first-hand harassment or bullying in their school. 71% of students reported that their classrooms did not include any LGBTQ+ topics. More than 30% of LGBTQ+ students reported missing school because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable. Over half of all LGBTQ+ students of color experienced in-person victimization based on race/ethnicity.

I am participating by _____. I challenge @_____ to join me in the Day of Silence by _____. #DayofSilence.

(add image description)

VISUAL ART

There are so many LGBTQ+ young artists and we'd love for these artists to share their gifts! Speaking out isn't just verbal, but can also be expressed through art. Post your art on your social page and at school, explain the connection to Day of Silence, tag @GLSEN and hashtag #DayofSilence for a chance to be featured on our IG page and story! Work with your school administration on selecting a location to host this art wall.

Day of Silence Exhibit

Solicit visual art from LGBTQ+ students and have a gallery walk of all the pieces submitted. Connect with your school's administration or a supportive teacher to display the pieces in public spaces!

Host an Open Mic

Words have power. Share your story through creative and expressive writing. With your GSA, other student clubs, a group of friends, or in collaboration with the school's administration or supportive teachers, you can organize an open mic during lunch or after school!

T-shirt Design Party

Bring a shirt you can repurpose for Day of Silence and decorate it with words and visuals, then wear it on the Day of Silence.

Drawing, Painting, Graphic Design etc.

This has been the traditional outlet for Day of Silence and Breaking the Silence, and it's an activity you can do with your GSA, student club, or friends! Have a gallery exhibition of all the pieces submitted or showcase them when you table or during your event.



Poetry and Other Forms of Writing

Words have power. Share your story through creative and expressive writing. The Day of Silence theme My Silence, My Action can serve as the writing prompt. You can also do this with your GSA or group of friends. Share your work with each other in this silent activity.

Zine Making Party

Connect with the closest GLSEN Chapter to you and share your zine! They can share it on their social media. If you tag @GLSEN and use the hashtag #DayofSilence and #BreakingTheSilence, you may be featured on GLSEN national's social media platforms!

Make Signs

Create large or mini protest signs for the Day of Silence. Find a slogan that works for you such as "Stop Silencing and Erasing LGBTQ+ Students!" or "LGBTQ+ Representation Now!"

Make Buttons

Make Day of Silence and Breaking the Silence buttons to wear and give out to folks participating. If you do not have buttons, try printing stickers with the graphic design on the GLSEN Day of Silence page.

ACCESSIBILITY

As for all advocacy work, make sure your participation is accessible and does not perpetuate or engage in ableist behavior.

Here are suggestions on how to participate with mindfulness and centering access needs:

- If you are planning an in-person event, offer all the ways your event will be accessible. For example, offering if the event will have live interpreters, wheelchair accessible, fragrance free for folks sensitive to smells, seating availability prioritized for folks who cannot stand for any length of time or need to be closer to the event for visibility. If an interpreter is needed, ask if they have a preferred interpreter. It is important to center the needs and requests of the folks you are supporting.
- Make a note of who to contact and get contact information if someone has accommodation requests such as interpreters, live captioning, image descriptions.
- Some people have light sensitivity, so avoid using flashing lights or give a warning if there will be flashing lights at the moment they happen. Give folks a chance to look away and let folks know when the flashing lights have stopped.
- Use image descriptions for folks who cannot see the image you are promoting or sharing. Here is an example of an image description for a photo. Image description is of a person with short pastel orange hair in a light blue t-shirt and jeans standing on a stage and passing a microphone to another person with long black hair wearing overalls with flower prints on them. For more information about why this is important, [check out this list of "Ways to Create Access"](#) from the Disability Intersectionality Summit.



- Make sure folks are using correct names and pronouns by having name tags and encouraging students to add their pronouns.
- Should they be mentioned or discussed, share content warnings for heavy topics such as mental health, death, violence, slurs, etc.
- Invite students to move up to the front, but do not force or pressure them. For some students, it may have taken a lot for some students to get through the door. Let folks be where they are most comfortable and feel the safest.
- This is the Day of Silence. For hearing folks, using American Sign Language (ASL) or making up gestures should not be entertaining, funny, or used as a substitute for not speaking. American Sign Language is a complex and effective language of communication for D/deaf and hard of hearing communities. It is ableist and offensive to try and make up gestures to communicate. If you or your peers need to communicate, writing on paper or online is the best option.

ACTIONS TO TAKE AFTER GLSEN'S DAY OF SILENCE

- Join us at the Virtual Breaking the Silence Rally on Friday, April 14th at 7pm ET. Join GLSEN's National Student Council and celebrity influencers as we Break the Silence together and make space to connect with youth and adults from across the country who took action, hear from students and influencers, and commit to our next call to action.
- Continue organizing! Bring your dreams and visions together to shape what a safe and liberated school environment looks like for you and your classmates. Brainstorm what is needed to get there and start building. Use this [#SafeToBe Vision Board](#) activity to get you and your GSA started.



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